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THE HON. SRI T. S. AVINASHILINGAM CHETTIYAR :—

“ I very much sympathize with the suggestion, but with the Government's finance, as they are, it is difficult to do this.”

[Note.—An asterisk (*) at the commencement of a speech indicates revision by the Member.]

II.—FOOD SITUATION IN THE PROVINCE.

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ Sir, I have placed in the hands of hon. Members a statement on the food situation in this Province. In fact, this is a second statement in addition to the one which I have distributed to the members some time ago. I had hoped that a discussion on the food situation would take place in the Assembly and at that time, I prepared an exhaustive statement for the information of the members of the Assembly and at the same time, I distributed copies of the same to the members of the Council as well. Unfortunately, there was no discussion possible in the other House and it has become possible in this House. The other statement was submitted about four weeks ago and it is not quite up-to-date. Therefore, I thought it better, in the interests of the discussion, that the Government should make a fresh statement and I have distributed copies of the fresh statement to the members of this House. I am sure everyone has got a copy of the statement in time to enable him to go through it so that he may be in a position to offer such criticism or advice as may be necessary. I would reserve what I have got to say at the end of the discussion so that I may answer the criticisms of hon. Members and I might then give them the answer which would explain the position more satisfactorily. I move, Sir, that the food situation in the Province be considered.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ In view of the fact that it is proposed to discuss three motions of the Government in one day, what shall be the procedure? Is there time to-day for all the three motions? I think there must be some time limit. Otherwise, we cannot take up all the three motions.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ I would like to suggest that the question of food be taken up first.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ I understand that, but hon. Members would like to discuss all the three motions in which case we have to set apart specific time for each motion.”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ If there is time, I would like all the three motions to be taken up.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ If hon. Members want all the three motions to be taken up to-day, then, I would divide the time into three parts; food discussion will end at a certain time; afterwards discussion on the textile policy will begin and end at a certain time and so on. I have no objection if hon. Members want to go on discussing for a longer time.”

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THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ I would like the food debate to be taken up in the morning and the other two in the afternoon.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ Is the House prepared to take the whole day on food discussion and to leave the others? ”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ I would like all the three motions to be taken up and finished to-day.”

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—“ We would like to give more attention to the food problem.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ Then, I think, it is better you fix some time for the food debate.”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ The suggestion of the Leader of the House may be accepted.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ The food debate will close before lunch; in view of that, I want to know how many members would like to speak on this so that I can fix a time-limit. Does the Hon. Leader of the Opposition want half an hour? ”

DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Fifteen minutes is sufficient for me.”

THE HON. SRI H. SITARAMA REDDI :—“ I take it that the textile debate will come in the afternoon.”

MR. PRESIDENT :—“ Yes, the Hon. Minister may go now if he wants. (Laughter.) Evidently he has not taken his food.”

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—“ Sir, we are very much thankful to the Hon. Minister for Food, not only for having taken up this food discussion first, but also for having given us details, details which we could not have known otherwise. It clearly shows that he has taken the hon. Members of this House and the public as well into confidence. As I have said on many occasions, the food problem is not a party problem at all. And generally, the public have been very much satisfied with the way the problem has been tackled by Government from time to time. After all, there was a mistake due to decontrol, but that mistake was not due entirely to this Government, but the Government of India wanted the Provincial Government to make a trial, by relaxing controls. And moreover, the trial was also worth making. Now that we are going from decontrol to control once again, I feel that Government have done their best in this matter, in the interests of the public. Although the Hon. Minister is to be congratulated on the manner in which he has tackled the food problem, in such a way that there has never been any famine or starvation in our Province, still, I am afraid the food problem remains very acute. As far as I could see from the Hon. Minister's statement, that if there is no prospect of the Government of India allotting ten lakhs of tons of rice for our Province this year, this Government may not be able to give 12 or even 8 ounces per head per day. I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, whether it would

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assist him, if this House passes a resolution requesting the Government of India to grant us these ten lakhs of tons this year. But he stated some time back that a resolution is not required, since the Government of India are doing their best. But for my part, I feel such a resolution is necessary to acquaint the Government of India with the fact that such an allocation is desired by all sections of this House, and by the public as well."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"Is there any motion given by the Leader of the Opposition on this or anything else?"

DR. V. K. JOHN:—"I would like to know from the Hon. Minister, whether we are to have only a general discussion, or whether we are to discuss a motion as well?"

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I do not think Government would like to bring in a motion now. If the hon. Member wants, he can make such a motion."

DR. V. K. JOHN:—"Then, Sir, I would like to move—

and upon such consideration this Council recommends to the Government to press upon the Government of India to allot ten lakhs of tons of foodgrains over and above the allotments already made this year to tide over the serious food situation in the Province.

"There are one or two important points I would like to deal with. The first is with reference to the price paid to the agriculturist. Sir, more than anything else, more than procurement or distribution—production is very important. Government are devoting their attention to this aspect of the problem also, but what has been done so far is not sufficient. The price given to the producer is to be considered. In fixing the price the reason given is that the price to be paid by the consumer should not be increased. But I am afraid the cultivator, i.e., the producer might leave his lands uncultivated, if he does not get a fair return for his produce.

"Some months ago, while I was travelling from Madura to Madras by train, I was told that a proprietor of land owning a few hundreds of acres was hesitating to bring these into cultivation, and was thinking whether it was not sufficient for him to cultivate what is really required for his own personal consumption. The reason given was that it was very risky to cultivate the lands, for one has to depend on the monsoon, and further the cost of cultivation has gone up, and if he undertook to cultivate a few hundreds of acres, he might be a loser by a few thousands of rupees; and so he thought it much better not to undertake that risk. Such being the case, my submission is that unless the producers' interests are also looked to, in the matter of the fixation of prices, the Government will not be encouraging cultivation at all. It is easy to advise the cultivator to cultivate his lands in the larger interests of the people of this Province. But agriculture is an industry, wherein the human element, i.e., the motive for a profit must be supplied, in order that more food may be produced. Government must go

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into this question in greater detail, and should not merely look at the consumers' point of view. The price which the consumer has to pay is the one that the Government have to fix and perhaps subsidise. The producer must have at least a small margin left with him, which will encourage him in his agricultural industry. But at the same time, I am very anxious that the consumer should not be asked to pay much more than what he could afford. In that case, certainly Government must come to the rescue of the consumer.

"Actually, Sir, I would like to put a specific question to the Hon. Minister. How much money has been spent in subsidising food?"

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"3.26 crores of rupees, up to 1st October 1948."

* DR. V. K. JOHN :—"Sir, a huge amount has been spent by Government in subsidising the food given to the consumers. I cannot ask them to spend anything more. There is therefore this dilemma. The producer must have a small margin to himself. The consumer should not be asked to pay a price which he could not afford. And our Government cannot afford to subsidize food any more. I should like to know what is the position taken by the Government."

"Another question I would like to ask the Hon. Minister is this. What is the rise in prices on account of the decontrol, and what was the price during the pre-war period?"

"Sir, the question of production is very important. The world situation with regard to rice is not quite good, and the Government of India could not import as much as they would like to, and so they may not be able to allocate more than 6 lakhs of tons to this Province. It is therefore all the more important that we must have a plan to increase production. I am not criticising the Government or telling the public that they have not paid any attention to this problem. I am only pointing out that greater attention should be paid. And in this connexion, I would like to tell hon. Members, what I heard from a friend of mine recently."

"The other day, I had a talk with Mr. S. Ananthakrishnan, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Messrs. Simpson and Company, who had been to America to visit industrial centres. He visited not only industrial centres, but even agricultural centres. One agricultural centre which he visited was the Imperial Valley in California, about 1,200 square miles in extent, which has been brought under cultivation, in spite of the fact there has been no rain at all in that place, not even a drop of rain had fallen there for the last 75 years. The temperature there ranges between two extremes—120°F in the shade in summer, and below 0°F in winter. But the soil was very well suited for cultivation. And one American conceived the idea of bringing water to that plot from a place 400 miles away. And the American Government came to his aid, with the result that to-day about 100 million dollars worth of corn and fruits are being produced there, in that

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desert area. The produce repaid many times the expenses for bringing water from a far off place. And when that gentleman left that place, selling away his interests in the land, he was asked to give a message to the public. The only message he gave was this: "When you want rain, do not pray to God, but merely telephone." The system which he introduced was to divide these 1,200 square miles of land, into plots of about 160 acres and build a small house, and install a telephone for each plot. And the person who takes up that plot for cultivation wants to utilise the water coming from a place 400 miles away, he has merely to insert a dollar into a slot, and telephone for water. And in a few minutes, thousands and thousands of gallons of water would begin to pour in on the plot. And if there is no response within 15 minutes' time, then no price need be paid for water. Thus, the owner of the land gets water for cultivating it, within 15 minutes' time, and has to pay very little for it.

The Government may not now be able to undertake big irrigation works. For instance there is one project which is intended to supply water to the City of Madras. I think that private enterprise may be encouraged in this field. Sir, America does not depend on an export economy so much as Britain does. It consumes 95 per cent of what it produces and does not depend on exports. The Americans are now willing to invest 500 million dollars here provided the money is returned to them within twenty years and they are paid a dividend of 6 per cent if 6 per cent or more than 6 per cent profit is earned and a dividend of less than 6 per cent if less than 6 per cent profit is earned and no dividend if no profit is earned. But they would like the capital to be returned to them in twenty years. I had occasion to mention this to some of the Hon. Ministers and I think they are seriously considering what could be done. I ask the Government to encourage private enterprise in the matter of irrigation, electric supply and supply of seeds and implements to the agriculturists. The Government must clear the prejudice of the agriculturists against the adoption of scientific methods. It is a very difficult task. I do not think that our Government's heart is not in it. The Government are doing their best.

Sir, I do not find in this paper which is circulated to us any reference to production. It is concerned only with procurement and distribution. Various complaints have been heard that in the name of procurement, discrimination is made as between individuals on account of the petty prejudices of the officials who are engaged in the work. Is the procurement based on the area cultivated, on the produce estimated or something else which is equitable so that people may not complain that some persons who have produced large quantities are not asked to give up everything while others who produce less are asked to give up everything and find it difficult to get on? In the matter of procurement, greater attention must be paid or more particular attention must be paid by the Hon. Minister for Food, so that it may be equitable and people may feel that no discrimination is made.

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“As far as distribution is concerned, I think rationing ought to be brought into force immediately. We had the rationing system some time before and I do not see why it should not be introduced immediately. Is it because we have not got sufficient stock and we have to procure sufficient stock for distribution? Or is it because we want to have the complete machinery in operation? It might be both. But I know the difficulties the people have to undergo, especially in Chingleput district, for getting their rice.

“Sir, in this connexion I would like to draw your attention to one matter which may not be directly pertinent to the question we are discussing but which is pertinent from a general point of view. I have mentioned this matter to the Hon. the Premier and to my Hon. Friends on the other side several times. I think we should introduce a law to punish black-marketing. We have to pay more for foodstuffs and we cannot afford to pay more for other things also such as cloth and other necessities of life. During war time we had a law restricting profits to 20 per cent of the cost of production of things produced here and 20 per cent of the landed cost on imported articles. The Government should bring forward a Bill to prevent black-marketing in all articles, now that the price of everything has gone up, including bus fares. I do not blame the Government. It is very necessary that the Government should as quickly as possible introduce a law which will prevent black-marketing so that the average consumer may be benefited.

“Sir, I thank the Hon. Minister once again for bringing this matter before the House for discussion. The usefulness of the Council is maintained, as we expect the Hon. the Leader of the House himself to maintain it. I move, Sir, that—

‘and upon such consideration this Council recommends to the Government to press upon the Government of India to allot ten lakhs of tons of foodgrains over and above the allotments already made for this year to tide over the serious food situation in the Province.’”

* K. T. M. AHAMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR:—

“Sir, I also join the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition in congratulating the Government on reintroducing controls, though the main reason given for this is not the short-supply of goods but the necessity to check inflation. Whatever the main reason may be we know that controls have come back. Last year when the Government of India decided on decontrol, we warned the Government that decontrol especially of foodgrains would cause misery to the poor people. The rich can afford to buy in the black-market, but the poor cannot. I am glad that the Government from their own experience of decontrol have come back to the old position and decided to reintroduce controls. We hope that the Government will see that the controls work satisfactorily. I have great pleasure in seconding the motion of Dr. John requesting the Government to obtain from the Government of India ten lakhs of tons of foodgrains. We all know how last year

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for want of sufficient food several parts of our province were put to great difficulty and how there were some deaths due to starvation in some places. I must congratulate the Hon. the Minister for Food for rushing food supplies then especially to places like Tinnevely and Ramnad and averting further starvation deaths. The Government must urge on the Government of India the necessity of further supplies of food so that the people may be enabled to keep their body and soul together.

“ Sir, I understand that the world food situation is not so difficult as last year. News received from Australia, United States of America and Argentina show that the wheat crops there have been unprecedented and that the problem is not one of shortage but of finding markets for disposal. Therefore the Government of India must take early steps to get the necessary wheat from those countries. They need not have to pay heavy price as they did last year as there is keen competition among those countries for marketing their wheat. Last year the United States of America refused to accept the recommendations of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations. Now there is a possibility of the Congress of the United States agreeing to the recommendations of the F.A.O. We may be able to get large quantities of wheat this year. As the Hon. Sardar Patel said at Benares, we have to pay heavily even for freight. But we have to save the people from starvation and we have to spend huge amounts in getting the grains from abroad until we are able to produce sufficient food in our own country by improved methods of agriculture. It is true that various irrigation schemes are now contemplated, but till they come into operation there will be difficulty in making the country self-sufficient. The available irrigation sources will have to be used with greater results. The agriculturists may be supplied with the necessary electric power, manure and implements quickly.

“ Sir, I must congratulate the Government on having decided to increase the price of paddy and rice. It is a very necessary step. We have been requesting the Government to do it, especially as the cost of living and the cost of cultivation have increased enormously. This increase ought to have been made long ago, but the Government of India did not allow our Government to do it. Now I am glad that our Government have been able to induce the Government of India to allow an increase in the price of paddy. I do not know whether it is sufficient to meet the situation. If any further increase is necessary, the Government must look into the matter.

“ As regards procurement, intensive procurement has been introduced in certain areas, and the statement of the Food Secretary says that; ‘ Informal rationing should be reintroduced in all the districts where intensive procurement is restored as soon as sufficient stocks are built up. Meanwhile, the relief shops will continue to supply rations to non-producers.’ Will that be enough? On the one hand, stocks are taken away from the people; on the other

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hand, they are not given the minimum quantity required for them to make both ends meet. Is the supply given through relief shops sufficient? The other day when a question was put on the floor of the House, the Hon. Food Minister said that whatever supply the Government had had been distributed among the people. Is that enough? Should you not supply the people with the necessary amount of foodgrains? You take away the foodgrains from them, and at the same time you do not see to it that they get the necessary amount of food during the interval between intensive procurement and the introduction of informal rationing. This is a matter which should be looked into by the Government seriously. How are the people to maintain themselves until the necessary stocks are built up when only you will introduce rationing?

“One other small matter to which I should like to call the attention of Government is this: among the directions given by the Government of India, there is one relating to the polishing of rice. It is said: ‘Polishing of rice should be banned so as to increase its nutritive value as also the quantity available for distribution.’ We are all rice-eaters and we all know how people are anxious to have polished rice. Many people won’t even touch rice which is not polished. Even the lowest class of people, the street dwellers, get their rice from the ration shop and polish it before cooking it. (A Member: ‘Polished rice will bring beri beri.’) The old theory was that polishing of rice would cause beri beri, but later the scientists have found that that theory is wrong, that beri beri is not caused by polishing of rice and that it is caused by something else. I think the Government of India issued a communique to that effect, if my recollection is not wrong. Sir, this question of prevention of polishing has been introduced by people who are not themselves accustomed to take rice. Looking to the general opinion prevalent among the people of this province, they should be allowed to polish rice for the purpose of cooking; otherwise, they will feel it very difficult to take rice. In fact, if you go along the streets of Madras, you will find the street dwellers polishing the ration rice. I have great pleasure, Sir, in supporting the motion.”

DR. V. K. JOHN:—“This is my resolution (handing over the resolution to Mr. President).”

* SRI D. KRISHNAMURTI:—“Mr. President, Sir, the food situation is very grave to-day and requires the immediate attention of Government. We are only getting 8 oz. ration. At the instance of Mahatma Gandhi, the province gave up the rationing system except in the case of a few municipalities. The Government now want to retrace their steps and introduce rationing. I am one of those who do not believe that the situation could be improved by retracing our steps. In the municipal towns where rationing continues to-day, it is a matter of common knowledge that the Government have miserably failed to put down black marketing. Eight ounces rice ration given to us plus 2 oz. of other grains is hardly sufficient to make an individual live on it. This is responsible for a good deal of malnutrition. Nonetheless people are getting

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on because they are depending upon black-marketing. It is a matter of common knowledge that in places where there is no ration, prices have gone very high and people are getting what they want, except the poorer classes. That is the situation to-day. If you want to put down black-marketing once for all, you have to find out the causes that support this black-marketing and root them out once for all, so that it may not thrive again. There are two causes: one is the black-marketeer cannot sell rice in the market unless he gets his stock and he gets it from some place, naturally from the producers. Producers sell their grains to this person probably with the connivance of some underlings of Government at prices higher than what they get otherwise. One of the reasons for the producer to sell his grain to the blackmarketeer is that the price he gets is higher while the price offered by Government is hardly sufficient to meet his production costs. Wages have gone up very high and the ryot finds it very difficult to produce grain at the rate at which he is permitted to sell. Therefore, to make good the loss he would otherwise sustain, he is obliged to sell it to the black-marketeer. We must apply our minds to this problem from two standpoints; one is to introduce very severe legislative measures to put down blackmarketing and make it punishable with severe punishments, so that the merchants and others may not resort to it. There is no prospect for us to get more than 8 oz. ration for the next two or three years, because the situation around us in Burma, China and other places wherefrom we get rice, is bad; difficulties are being created there and it is likely they may be multiplied in the future. The 'grow more food' campaign has not produced any appreciable results. My hon. Friend Dr. John was just mentioning to the House the case of the Imperial Valley Scheme in the United States of America where production is carried on a large scale. In this connexion, I am glad to mention to this House that the Ramapadasagar project—which is being talked of very frequently in the Press—is capable of irrigating more than a million acres, thereby adding to the area of wet cultivation. (A Member: 15 years hence.) May be it is a question of the future but is there any chance of your meeting the food situation without increasing the production of rice? It is very unfortunate, Sir, to learn from some persons that the Government at the Centre is very lukewarm about this project. I ask; where is the prospect of our making ourselves self-contained with reference to food unless and until we do something to increase the production of foodcrops which is very vitally necessary? Ten years hence we may perhaps be able to get the required quantity of rice; but for the last four years we have been getting on on 10 oz., 8 oz. and probably it will become 6 oz. hereafter and we do not see any rosy picture or hope for the future unless and until the international situation improves. Therefore I suggest that the Government should pay more attention to the prevention of black-marketing and also to the enhancement of production by taking up immediately big irrigation projects.

“One thing more I want to say is that after decontrol was established there were not many cases of starvation in the areas where rice is grown and Government by their methods of procurement and transport have been able to transport paddy to places of

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scarcity and thus avoid instances like the Bengal Famine in this province. Much credit is due to the Government in that respect and I do not see why that system is to be changed. By the re-introduction of control the Government, the underlings of Government will only add confusion and our experience of these controls in various respects is very bitter indeed. I have been to several places in the mufassal where there are no controls and people there are not complaining that they are not getting what they want; their complaint is only about the prices. Government should therefore direct their attention to the control of prices. Another fact which stares us in the face is that even in areas where there is no control to-day, food is available either in the open market or in the black-market. That goes to prove that the total quantity produced is not so insufficient as the official figures of Government placed before us show, but the ryot does not give up his grain and it is being secreted. In the villages the karnam and the village munsif, the lower strata in the hierarchy of Government"

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Your remarks do not apply to the deficit districts? "

* SRI D. KRISHNAMURTI :—" I do not know about that; but I know that in East Godavari, West Godavari and Krishna, there are large quantities available, and people there do not find it very difficult to maintain themselves. And so long as the people get enough quantity of foodgrains, be it in the open market or in the black-market, the proposition stands proved that production is not insufficient to cope with the consumption in the province. What I suggest therefore is that the Government should pay more attention to this aspect, viz., the question of control—not control of rationing, but control of production and transport, so that the situation may ease. I do not very much believe that the Government of India will come to our rescue and give us more than six lakhs of tons of grain as they did last year. Our deficit is large, viz., six lakhs and the situation is not very hopeful. The Government must take the responsibility to see that there is no famine in any part of the province. As I said, the fact that there is sufficient quantity produced in the country is proved by the supply available in the blackmarket which unfortunately has escaped the vigilance of the Government in spite of their best efforts. My suggestion to the Government is that they should pay more and more attention to see that the ryot is satisfied, that he sells his grain in the open market and not in the black-market and that the persons who distribute in the black-market are penalized so that they may not hereafter resort to black-marketing. With these words, Sir, I support the motion of hon. Dr. John."

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—" Mr. President, Sir, at first I had no desire to intervene in this debate. It was usual for us to use, in connexion with the Congress resolutions some time ago, the words 'hardy annual.' Similarly, in this House we are having this hardy quarterly. Every time the Legislature meets, we have made it a point to discuss about food, and every

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time we discussed, we had the same point and we have not proceeded any further. (A member : 'Whose fault?') Everybody's fault, I think, from the villager upwards. Sir, I neither support nor oppose the resolution of my friend the Leader of the Opposition. The contents of the resolution have already been sent to the Government of India. The Madras Government have asked for ten lakhs of foodgrains for the Madras Presidency in order to manage the situation. But I am sorry that we should be content to ask for doles from the Government of India or from foreign countries and to distribute what we get among the people through ration shops or relief shops. Sir, we have all forgotten to follow Mahatmaji's teachings though we remember the name of Mahatma Gandhi.

Sir, Mahatmaji, while he was alive, was advising everybody to produce their food and their cloth and be self-sufficient and never to wait upon foreigners to make these supplies. But we did try to produce ourselves and we also managed with the imported goods, sending a lot of money to foreign countries to purchase rice at a very high cost. Ultimately, Mahatmaji pressed the country to remove these controls, rationing and all that, primarily to put down the dishonest people of this country. Sir, people have become so dishonest that they began to corrupt officials. People are willing to corrupt the officials in order that they may earn money and the officials are willing to take money and shield them. That is how corruption and black-marketing are increasing and it is for that primary reason that Mahatmaji advised us to remove controls and accordingly controls were given up. But what has now happened? The Government of India have pressed upon us to the need for re-introducing controls. I do not know the advisers to the Government of India who initiated this move. They pressed upon the Government of India to re-introduce controls and the Government of India pressed it upon the Provinces and food control has been introduced in this Province. What is going to be done, I ask the Madras Government. Are they sure now at least, while introducing this control, their officers will behave in a straightforward manner and their agents will give up black-marketing and they will procure the maximum amount of foodgrains which the Government fix as target. I am not sure, Sir, that they will do so.

"Sir, I can quote one or two instances which occurred in recent days. Once the Firka Supply Officer had visited one of the relief shops near my place. When he was there, the people of the village collected together and told him that black-marketing was going on and foodgrains were being sold at higher prices. The Firka Supply Officer then looked into the account, measured the stock and found that 140 measures of rice were left unaccounted for in the account book. He made some fuss and the ration shop-keeper thrust ten ten-rupee notes into his pocket and everything dissolved. The Firka Supply Officer then went away to the disappointment of these villagers.

"Sir, wholesalers are given rice in large quantities for distribution among the relief shops. As soon as they take rice from the Government godowns, some portion of that stock is being put into lorries.

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and sent to Madras straightaway. They purchase rice from the Government at Rs. 29 a bag but they sell it in black-market at the rate of Rs 58 a bag. This kind of thing goes on everywhere. It is not one relief shop that does it. Most of them do like that. If this thing goes on even now when control is being introduced, do you expect your rationing to be successful? Do you expect that the consumer will have his quota properly? Do you expect that the consumer will be satisfied if the price of foodgrains is increased? Now the consumer gets a measure of rice for 10½ annas or 11 annas according to the Government rate. Of course, in the relief shops it is sold at a higher rate without the officials knowing it or conniving at it. If the present price is increased by another 25 per cent, it will further hit the consumer. So far as I am concerned, I am not a consumer in the sense that I do not go to a relief shop. I am a producer. Of course, the increase given will benefit me. But what will the consumer think? Will the consumer be able to purchase it at a higher price? Already one of my friends on the other side was saying that the increase announced by the Government is not enough. Of course, there must be some increase so that the agriculturists may produce more. But what will the consumer think? Will he be able to purchase it at that increased rate? He cannot. So that must also be considered.

“ Under these circumstances, Sir, is it right or is it good to have this control? You may say that when you abolished the control, the prices soared up. True, we all know it. If you had left it for some more time, the prices would have fallen. Already it has begun to fall from Rs. 1-8-0 to Re. 1 or even 14 annas a measure. By bringing this control, you are indirectly helping the merchants. As soon as they hear that control is being introduced, they immediately rush to the villagers and purchase paddy for Rs. 30 or Rs. 35 a bag when the Government rate comes to Rs. 12 a bag. Having purchased it, they indulge in black-marketing. This is one of the questions that must be considered.

“ Now, what I would suggest to the Government is to produce more. How to produce more foodgrains? Give all the facilities to the agriculturists to produce more. The means are there. You gave subsidy for the sinking of wells. Wells were sunk. But did you find out how many wells are capable of producing more water? Did you find how many wells have been installed with electric pumps? Did you find how many wells have been installed with picottahs? You have not done anything in this matter. I want to know how many villages were supplied with electricity till now? Whereas in the Madras City, so many cinema houses are supplied with electricity; so many oil mills are supplied with electricity; and so many printing presses are supplied with electricity. Government have done nothing to supply electricity to the villages. So, that is the chief thing we have to consider. What I would suggest is, give electric current to all the wells. Then, you can expect even second crop and the lands will yield more. This year, we have not got much rain and the harvest season is also approaching and we cannot expect a good harvest. But if you give electricity to villages and

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if you supply the villagers with good manure, they will also cultivate the second crop called 'sornavari'—in Tanjore it is called 'kuru-vai' crop—and that will be sufficient to make each district self-supporting.

"Even this is not sufficient. You must remove all inter-district and inter-provincial controls and allow merchants to import rice from Burma, Siam and other places. Then, the imported rice and the local rice will compete with each other and prices will come down. Sir, that is the thing that we must do if we want to bring down prices. We cannot expect any great help from the Ramapadasagar Project or from the Krishna-Pennar Project or from the Tungabhadra Project. They will take some years. The minimum thing that we can do to-day is to improve the irrigation facilities, to sink more wells and to supply villages with electricity.

"In this connexion, I am impelled to quote what Mahatma Gandhi used to say whether it is relished in this House or not when he referred to villages. He used to say that 'hitherto villages were helping the cities. Now, cities must help the villages.' This is what Mahatma Gandhi was saying.

"My hon. Friend Mr. Krishnamurthi was saying that eight ounces plus two ounces of ration were being given. But what is our lot in the villages? We are given four ounces plus two ounces. Is that enough for us?"

MR. PRESIDENT :—"Certainly not."

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—"Sir, we have been given six ounces and four ounces of ration and now informal rationing is coming. Are they going to increase the ration? According to the statement placed on the table of the House, it is proposed to increase it only in the statutorily rationed areas and not in the informally rationed areas. I ask, Sir, is this ration sufficient for a labourer working in the field who has to toil throughout the day. Whereas in the case of the citizens of Madras, they are given eight ounces plus two ounces, and it is going to be increased to 12 ounces. In the City, the people can live somehow or other. They have got other amenities. They can go to coffee hotels and take as much food as they like. They can even have 'chota hazri'. But what about the man working in the fields? Is the ration of six ounces or four ounces sufficient? Certainly not. Where can he get 'chota hazri'? He can have only his ration of four or six ounces. Even 16 ounces of ration is not sufficient for him. But you give him only this meagre ration. With this ration, how can he produce more foodgrains? We cannot extract more work from him. So, I want to impress upon this House and the Hon. Minister for Food the need for an increased ration in the mufassal places even to the detriment of the City people. Let him lower the ration in the City so that he may increase the ration for the villager who has to labour in the fields and produce food for the citizens here.

"One other point on which I want to speak

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MR. PRESIDENT :—“ The hon. Member has already taken twenty minutes.”

* SRI C. N. MUTHURANGA MUDALIYAR :—“ Then, I resume my seat.”

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ABDUL LATIF FAROOKHI SAHIB BAHADUR :—“ Mr. President, Sir, I am thankful to the Hon. Minister for Food not only for giving us this opportunity to discuss the food situation but also for proclaiming that the policy of the Government is in favour of recontrol. In the discussion of the food situation on the 13th of August last, I spoke against decontrol. At that time you were pleased to put me the question ‘ The central point of the hon. Member is that the Government must re-introduce control, is it not?’ and I answered in the affirmative. To-day wisdom has dawned on the Government, though belated. It was at the instance of the Central Government that this Government were stampeded into introducing decontrol. The Central Government were moved, if I may say so, by blackmarketers who wanted to take advantage of decontrol. As I foreshadowed at that time, immediately after decontrol the price of foodgrains and other necessities of life rose abnormally high before the very eyes of this Government, but they were not able to take any action against the people who were responsible for it. We are thankful to the Government of India and the Government of Madras for reconsidering the question and deciding in favour of recontrol.”

“ What passes my comprehension and what, I feel, a man with ordinary common sense cannot understand is the following passage in the note on the food position :—

‘ As regards procurement prices for the next kharif year, the Government have, after careful consideration of the representations received by them and of the increase in the cost of living as well as in the cost of cultivation that have taken place since last year, decided to increase the existing village-site prices suitably taking care to see that the price to the consumer is not increased by more than Rs. 2 per imperial maund of rice.’

To prevent an increase in the cost of living, the Government are careful to see that the increase of price to the consumer is not more than Rs. 2. An increase of Rs. 2 per maund of rice works out to an increase of two annas per measure approximately. A man who now pays 11 annas or 12 annas will have to pay hereafter 13 annas or 14 annas. Is this lessening the cost of living as the Government seem to suggest? Is it not increasing the cost of living? If the common man is asked to pay for the increase, his lot will become worse. Therefore I suggest that whatever the increase may be, it must be borne either by the Central Government or by the Provincial Government.

“ Another point which I should like to impress upon the Government is about the polishing of rice. I do agree that consumption of polished rice may result in malnutrition. But all people are not like my friend Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliyar who gets fine rice from his fields. Men like me have to purchase from relief

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shops. The quality of rice sold in these shops is so bad that it is impossible to take it. It produces indigestion, diarrhoea, and other stomach troubles. If the Government are bent upon preventing people from polishing, let them see that a better quality of rice which does not require polishing is supplied.

“ My hon. Friend Mr. C. N. Muthuranga Mudaliyar very pertinently asked the question : Why is there this deficiency ? The Government of India are preventing the Provincial Governments from taking up the initiative and acting independently in the matter. Formerly merchants were allowed to import foodgrains and other articles from whatever place it was possible for them to get. There was competition and therefore the merchants were selling at a lower price. What prevents the Government of India from giving freedom to the Provincial Governments is a matter on which we have to get enlightenment either from the Hon. Food Minister or from the Government of India. To a lay mind like mine it appears that if the Provincial Governments are given freedom and they in turn give freedom to the merchants, the merchants would import from Burma and other places, compete in the local market and sell at a cheaper price.

“ Then, there is blackmarket. Blackmarket will certainly prevail until the Government take stringent measures to prevent it. To some extent it was prevented by control during former days. I do not say that it was altogether non-existent during days of control, but it was very difficult to blackmarket. In spite of it, people were able to purchase foodgrains from ration shops. Now there are relief shops, and in them there is no proper control and organization. The organization set up for control has been abolished to minimise expenditure. Now the Government want to reimpose control, and once again they have to employ more or less the same number of officers.

“ Once again I impress on the Government the need to prevent blackmarket as far as possible and thank them for giving this opportunity for discussion.

“ With these words, I support the motion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition.”

SRI M. D. T. KUMARASWAMI MUDALIYAR :—“ I thank the Government for the steps taken by them to reimpose control and enforce strict procurement. In connexion with intensive procurement, I have to request the Government to instruct their officers to procure only from producers and not from the poor villagers. During harvest season, the villagers labour and get their wages in the shape of grains. The officers procure the whole quantity available with the villagers and show a procurement figure of 10 kotas and 15 kotas per day. The value of it will be about Rs. 200 to Rs. 300. This is done by the officers in their anxiety to show a good record and not with the idea of saving the country. By such procurement, they make the poor people suffer. Especially in villages, poor are in larger numbers than the rich, and they are not able to purchase foodgrains for their requirements. The rich can afford to buy at any price but the poor cannot. If only procurement from the producers is done in the proper manner and at

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the proper time, the poor need not be made to suffer. Officers generally start procurement fifteen or twenty days after harvest. In the interval, the produce goes underground. If they commence in proper time, even more quantity can be procured.

"As regards the subsidy for sinking wells, it is a sheer waste of funds. One big well will be of more use than a number of small wells. In an acre of land, two or three wells are dug and the result is there is very little water in each well.

"With these words, I support the motion of Dr. John."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—"Mr. President, Sir, it is my duty and privilege to say a few words about the food problem in this Presidency. The Hon. Minister has made a very clear statement which we can easily follow. But he has omitted the last paragraph which he usually adds in which he appeals to the producers to co-operate with the Government in the matter of procurement.

"One year ago we stood here and said that rationing was rational and non-rationing irrational. Sir, we have to bring that point to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Food once again. Although rationing gives only eight or ten oz., or 12 oz., yet it gives an assured quantity of food. I think there is control of prices only in districts where rationing prevails. Price control was urged very strongly by the members who spoke before me. So I will not dwell very long on that subject. In non-ration districts, the price has not fallen. In Chingleput, the price of one measure of rice is as high as Re. 1-6-0, 1-4-0 or 1-2-0 (Interruption) and though the hon. Member says that it has gone down to 14 annas I have not found it so. But under the system of rationing, the price of even the best quality of rice was never more than eight annas or ten annas inclusive of sales tax. Therefore the villagers will be glad to have rationing re-introduced in their areas. During decontrol days we found that the available rice did not circulate in proper quantities for distribution and that is the reason why we are urging the re-introduction of rationing.

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"Sir, I will not labour this point any more, because members who possess more brains than I do, have already dealt with it.

"Sir, rationing prevents blackmarketing, but hon. Members who spoke a little while ago tried to show that rationing has increased blackmarketing and the hon. Leader of the Opposition said that a tremendous machinery would be required to suppress blackmarketing. Sir, in my opinion, no such tremendous machinery is required to suppress blackmarketing, because we have got the cheapest machinery for the purpose available within ourselves. If we, each of us, make up our minds to see to it that we do not go in for blackmarket rice, under any circumstances, if we only make up our minds to refrain from encouraging those who indulge in blackmarket rice, we can surely put an end to this blackmarketing. If by chance some friends or relations come into my house, and if the ration that is given to me has got used up, I would simply send for some meals from the various hotels which are selling meals and if all of our friends did likewise, and for those

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extra people who come to their houses if they should buy their meals from the hotels, we need not have to go in for blackmarket rice and encourage it by paying higher prices. That is the sure way of putting down blackmarketing.

"Another way to stop blackmarketing is that whenever we go out of the City, for any reason, we should give notice to the Rationing authorities accordingly and should not draw ration for those days. If such information is given to the Rationing Centre, the ration shop-keeper will not be given our ration of rice and he will not have the opportunity to sell such rice in the blackmarket. Therefore the blackmarket is not a matter for the machinery of the Government alone to deal with. It is a matter for each individual to co-operate with the Government and to make up their minds to prevent the same by all means in their power. Government have, no doubt, employed a number of officers, such as inspectors, supervisors and other staffs to check blackmarketing, and are spending a large sum of money over them, but that alone will not effectively tackle and put down blackmarketing, unless people also co-operate with them in their efforts.

"Now, Sir, let me come to the question of loans and finances. I was surprised, Sir, at the suggestion of the hon. Leader of the Opposition in asking us to take a loan from a country which has more than half the total quantity of bullion in the world on a twenty-year basis. Sir, I know that America is the richest country in the world where they have got more than half the gold in this world and if we are to seek a financial accommodation from them, we will have to bind ourselves for our life-time and not only that, but we shall have also to bind our sons and daughters, because I do not know what will happen twenty years hence. If we seek to obtain anything like five hundred million dollars from America at the rate of 6 per cent per annum, we would be putting ourselves into the same plight as other debtor countries in the world are now put to, and undergo the same sufferings, hardships and handicaps as they are undergoing, and this policy would involve this country into a long-term debt. We would get into a national debt, not for any capital machinery or implements which we so badly need for our country, but merely for food, which we are unable to produce in this country. Surely, Sir, we cannot think of getting into such a thing, because we are seeing how another eastern country has got into all sorts of troubles and difficulties through getting gold and some financial accommodation from western countries. They have had to introduce indirect taxation by inflation. Therefore the Government should be doubly careful in entering into such sort of arrangements which will bind ourselves and our posterity for decades together."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—"I did not say six per cent interest, Sir. I only said six per cent as the maximum dividend that should be paid on the foreign capital invested in this country. I did not mention either loan or interest, Sir."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—"I beg the hon. Member's pardon, Sir. I probably misunderstood him. Then what is it that

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he wanted this country to get from America? I will ask the hon. Leader of the Opposition if he did not mention the sum of five hundred million dollars as the possible amount that might be borrowed by this Province or by this country?"

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" I did not say that this Province or this country should borrow from America. I simply suggested that the American capitalists might be attracted to invest their capital for the industrial development of this country on which we might pay a dividend up to a maximum of six per cent. That is all what I have said, Sir."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—" Then, Sir, I regret I have not understood him properly, but I repeat, Sir, that we cannot contemplate heavy foreign loans."

" Then, Sir, as for the 10 crores of rupees that was referred to yesterday as the Japanese reparation for war damages to this country, it was with very great pleasure and interest that I heard the proposal of the Central Government and the promise they have made to this Province that they would give Rs. 5½ crores out of that amount as our share of compensation for the loss sustained by this Province, during the war, and I hope that some constructive schemes will be worked out by this Government and placed before those in authority in the Central Government, by means of which we will get this additional 10 lakhs tons of rice that we require year after year without payment till the 5½ crores is absorbed."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The Hon. Minister for Food wants about half-an-hour for his reply. I hope that the hon. Lady Member will soon finish, so that the Hon. Minister's reply to the debate may be finished before lunch."

* MRS. MONA HENSMAN :—" Sir, I have got only one more thing to say and it is this. I trust, Sir, that the present system of rationing may be worked out on a sound basis, so that the unpleasantness, hardships and difficulties that were caused to the people during the earlier period might be removed and that rationing is not only brought forward now, but continued for many years, so that we do not get into this destructive element again and encourage the worst in human nature."

SRI M. NARAYANA RAO :—" Mr. President, Sir, as the Hon. Minister for Food is to make his reply soon, I shall finish my speech as early as possible. I want to bring only a few facts to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Food. Sir, the increased price for paddy is proposed to be given by the Government from January next, but the short-term crop in the districts of West Godavari, Krishna and East Godavari has come into the market even a month before. People have sold their produce in the market at a lower price. I say that in fairness to them, they who have helped to ease the food situation earlier should be treated fairly by the Government, and the Government must consider their case and see that the difference in price is paid to them. This is only a very reasonable request. They have sold their short-term produce even from the 15th October. So, I would once again request the

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Hon. Minister for Food to consider their case sympathetically and see that they also get the benefit of the increased price which is proposed to be given to the producer.

"Sir, another thing I want to bring to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Food is that the Andhra Congress Committee and the Andhra Kisan Congress Committee have resolved that Rs. 9 per maund should be the least price that should be fixed by the Government for paddy. I would request the Government to reconsider this question and see if their representation could be accepted.

"One more thing, Sir. As regards the Nellore special quality rice, the Government seem to have given a higher price for it than to the first quality rice that is purchased from Kistna, East Godavari and West Godavari districts. When I pointed out last time to the Hon. Minister for Food that in the Kistna, West Godavari and East Godavari districts, we have got the same quality of rice as is supplied by Nellore, he said that it was too late at that time to consider the matter, and that he would consider it next time. Therefore, I want to bring this to the notice of the Hon. Minister for Food to see that our rice is also paid the same price as the price paid for Nellore rice.

"Finally, Sir, I wish to point out that no strong case has been made out for the re-imposition of controls, except that the Government of India want that it should be adopted as an All-India policy, and that the Government, if left to themselves, would not have consented to this re-imposition of control. But I submit, Sir, that at least in surplus districts, no rationing need be enforced, because people were happy without rationing. If rationing is absolutely necessary, and if Government are afraid that prices will go up again and that food may not be available except at blackmarket price, I may suggest, that rationing may be confined to deficit districts. Sir, with these remarks, I close my speech."

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—"Mr. President, Sir, I am very grateful to the hon. Members for the criticisms they have made on our food policy. On the whole, I feel, both the Opposition and the Members of the Congress Benches are exactly in a mood to support the attempts of this Government to tide over the present food crisis. I am indeed grateful to them for all the suggestions they have made and for sympathising with the Government in their plight to get over the food situation. Before replying to the various points raised in the course of the debate, I should like to make one or two general remarks. First of all, I want to tell this House, and I hope they realise it, that ours is a deficit Province in the matter of food. That is really the crux of the whole situation and that is the main reason for all our troubles. We want, as far as possible, and as far as it lies in our power, to make this a surplus Province. Then alone would we be able to see the end of our difficulties and when once we are able to produce more food than we require, prices will naturally come down and the food situation will be greatly eased and the Government will then be able to stipulate and fix a fair sale-price for the foodgrains and take all the necessary measures to ensure adequate supply and also check rice in prices and thus handle the situation very easily. Until then we have got to control

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the food and unless it is controlled, we will not be able to have a fair and equitable distribution. Under the present circumstances, what the Government can do is to procure as much as possible from the surplus districts and make an equitable distribution of the food which is procured and which is necessary for our very existence. That alone the Government can commit themselves to. The Government must therefore be permitted to take all measures to secure as much foodgrains as possible by means of intensive procurement and to distribute the food at their disposal equitably and at fair prices.

“ Sir, it is a very difficult thing to speculate upon food production, because it depends upon various factors which cannot be determined beforehand and which is beyond our control. The rains, for instance is a factor on which depends food production. Then there is the pest which has a great part to play with regard to production. Then again the fertility of the soil and the nature of the land; the provision of manure and the availability of agricultural implements and the interest the ryot takes to produce more—all these are factors that go into play in the matter of increased food production. In dealing with this question, I must here and now state that without the protective hand of the Government of India, with regard to import and bulk purchase from outside the country, it will not be possible to deal with the food situation properly and satisfactorily. It is not a question of mere import from a particular country outside, Sir. India has got to go to all countries where there is a surplus of food to be exported, and it is the International Food Council which stipulates the quota, fixes the price and arranges for the import and distribution of food from surplus countries of the world; and the Government of India which has a place in the International Food Council has to play a very important part in the matter. It is not such an easy matter, as some of the hon. Members think, that could be handled by our importing merchants in Madras. Perhaps from here and there, our importing merchants in Madras may be able to bring the food necessary for us in the City and that too at a tempting price, but they will not be able to secure such a large quantity as to feed the whole population of this Province. They may feed a few individuals here and there, but it is a very huge task to feed the entire population and it will not be possible for them to manage it. Therefore the argument that if private merchants are allowed to do so, they would tackle the problem effectively is not at all correct. Under this International arrangements, we get the minimum prices that could be charged for the foodgrains coming to us by the International check and International arrangements. As I said just now, the price is already fixed by the International Council, and since we have to arrange for shipments and meet the incidental expenses on it, we have necessarily to put up our costs on it and fix a price at which we can distribute it to the people. Therefore we have necessarily to control our prices. We cannot with any privilege ask the International Food Council to give us whatever quantity of food we want and at whatever prices we like, when we ourselves are not able to produce the necessary food within our country and when

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we are ourselves not able to procure foodgrains at a lower price within the country. Therefore, Sir, price control is very necessary in our food control policy.

“ Therefore it is that every time we put up the prices of foodgrains we have got to get the consent of the Government of India before we do so. It is not as if one can say : I will pay so much price for paddy. It is the Government of India who have got to be satisfied with the prices that are given because it is they who negotiate with the international countries with regard to our prices on the basis of which their import prices are settled. I am just trying to explain the relation of the Government of India with the various other Provincial Governments that have got to deal with the situation. The whole question of food is one for the Government of India and we as a Province have got to give our complete co-operation to the Government of India with regard to production, etc. So it is that we have got to go and meet very often; sometimes we meet once in two or three months in consultation with the Government of India and more than twice in a year with the Government of India and the States and decide upon our prices and upon our policy and upon our production. All these things are connected with food production. Sir, the Government of India also are buying enormous amounts of foodgrains and they are paying large amounts for such purchase. They have been paying to such an extent that it made them seriously think whether they should go on procuring at this rate. The whole of the revenues of the Government of India or at least a major portion of it goes only for buying foodstuffs from the International market to make our people live. When a good portion of it is taken away by this, very little is left for the Government of India in the finances of the country to meet other demands that are made. Therefore they have been obliged to go into the question of food control very often. They tried decontrol and they gave it a fair trial. Whether they did investigate the provincial position or not is not the question. They decided to decontrol and we fell in line with them simply for the reason that we could not afford to have a separate food policy. Let us see what has happened to the decontrol. Hon. Members in the House said that we did not allow people to die and there is no famine coming. Quite true. But will the same set of conditions continue this year is a point that we will have to consider. I am afraid to say, Sir, that we are nearly at the breaking point with regard to the rising prices of foodstuffs in the country on account of decontrol. That must be said clearly and if I agreed to a complete reintroduction of control it was because we have by this one year's experience found that we were not able to control the rising prices. It is true that producers get a little more price. There is no denying the fact. But it must also be known that the price of foodgrains went beyond the capacity of the ordinary poor man. That is what happens. There are 99 poor men as against one rich man who can afford to pay high prices. Therefore the Government of India has to see that the whole lot of our people are given at least their minimum quantity of food. So, Sir, they decided that the only way to control this

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galloping prices beyond the control of the ordinary man was to control the food that we have got at our disposal and securing food from the various other sources where it can be got and then distributing it pro rata according to the rationing system. It may be true that a few producers here and there may not like our going back to rationing. But as against them a large number of people who are also producers are there. As it is, Sir, agriculture, except in a very few cases where people own large tracts of land and employ labour, is not found to be a profitable concern. The agricultural industry is not a profitable concern for a small holder owning an acre or two or less than 5 acres. Therefore when control becomes necessary the control of prices also becomes necessary particularly in securing to the Government all the foodgrains from the surplus producers. Yesterday, Sir, Sardar Patel was saying in Benares that we must give up our selfishness and go and meet our people with a generous heart, particularly people who need our help and we should not resort to blackmarketing. This is very good advice. But for some inexplicable reason people's appetite for making more money has become so great in this country in all walks of life and much more so with regard to foodgrains. While they do not produce food themselves, still they hope to procure enormous profits by selling food and foodgrains. That is one of the important lines of the merchant classes to-day. What happened last year? They went from town to town and procured from the producers all the available quantity of foodgrains by all means and stored them and then by distributing them made profits. That is not good at all. That is really blackmarketing that happens. It is not as if all our people take a delight in blackmarketing on a stuff so necessary for life as food. Yet we can see what is happening to-day. It is true they go to that extent in spite of the measures that we take and the amount of law that we bring to play with regard to these controls. We are not able to deal with this question because it is a universal proposition concerning every man, woman and child. And nothing in the world will prevent our people from getting the food if they could get it. Therefore in a commodity like food which becomes a necessity of life control becomes very very difficult and therefore it is necessary for us to bring pressure and secure all that could possibly be secured. But it has been proved that when the control was on the prices of foodgrains were less than when they were decontrolled and after decontrol the prices went up to 200 or 300 per cent and that cannot be permitted again. Therefore it has become necessary that this control should be reintroduced. But in introducing this control again we cannot but be benefited by past experience so that in the introduction of control again we can as far as possible tide over the many pitfalls that we experienced in the last control period. Whether that proposition would alleviate the cry of our people or would make us all more generous and less selfish is a problem which I cannot answer. But we can all try and see what we are able to procure is at least shared with the common man and give him such an amount that is possible to give. Therefore we argued with the Government of India when the question of

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control was reintroduced: 'For God's sake we cannot continue this 8 oz. and 6 oz. in our country. It may be we have kept our population on a margin of starvation for a long time but we cannot go on very long like this. You must now allow us to work on a minimum of 12 oz. at least.' And that was our condition for taking back control. So working at the rate of 12 oz. we have put our demand to the Government of India and that demand has come to about 10 lakhs of tons. All these years we have been drawing from the Government of India up to a margin of $2\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs tons on an average. This year we have drawn as much as 6 lakhs of tons because we had a famine and the failure of the monsoon last year. And for the coming year we have made a demand for over 10 lakhs of tons working on the rate of 12 oz. as the minimum requirement per capita for our people. (Sri N. Venkatachalamaji: Dehusked rice or polished rice?) Dehusked rice, Sir, contains 5 per cent more food. I am not talking about that now, Sir. I am talking on general terms. When we get rice whether it is dehusked or polished it does not matter.

"This 10 lakhs of tons is there which we have asked for. That is our contention with the Government of India. In regard to this question, Sir, we will have to see whether the Government of India could give us 10 lakhs of tons. That is a matter on which all Provincial Governments will have to depend upon the influence of the Central Government. It might however happen that the Government of India may not be able to give the full quotas allotted by them under certain circumstances beyond their control. They may not be able to fulfil their obligations to the Provincial Governments. It is just possible. (An hon. Member: What is the ration in other Provinces?) It varies from Province to Province. As far as we are concerned we do not want to give 6 oz. and 8 oz. like last year. Now we have increased the ration to 10 and 12 oz. In the budget, we have prepared we have estimated the food requirements of our people at the rate of 12 oz. from January 1949. But even now we have already increased our ration from 8 to 10 oz. But on this scale of ration we should not think that everything is all right. We as a Government are giving foodgrains in rice, in ragi, in cholam and in kambu. Last year there was a hue and cry with regard to the grains that we supplied. People said: We are not used to these grains which you are shoving on us. I must say this, Sir. When food is a scarcity and to procure it is so much more difficult, would it be given to a hungry nation to say, 'I want one particular food which I am used to?' We cannot satisfy people, Sir, on that score. We are trying to secure as much rice as we can but if we cannot secure that there are other grains available and I request the public of this Province to condone the Government and try to help us as far as possible by taking as many grains as we can secure and give them. But unfortunately in the Madras Province we are all rice-eating people, at least a majority are. We know there was an effort the year before last when the Government wanted to popularize foodgrains to which we are not accustomed and wheat was imported. To-day we have educated our people to accept wheat though reluctantly. Therefore, if we

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give cholam or kambu, it is because we have got only that and people have got to take themselves to them. Otherwise, they will have to go starving. Between these two alternatives, which is better? "

K. T. M. AHAMED IBRAHIM SAHIB BAHADUR :—" The villagers are not accustomed to wheat so much as rice."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is not a question of villagers liking it or not. I am talking of the food problem. The food problem has reached such a stage when we cannot look to the tastes of the people who live in particular areas. It is not a question of taste. I find several criticisms in the papers saying that we are not at all mindful of the tastes of our people. When there is the threat of starvation, it is not the time to think of taste. If it is possible to control the prices so that people can pay, people should not think of taste. They can take anything to satisfy their taste by paying big amounts and Government have no objection to it. As my hon. Friend, Mr. Muthuranga Mudaliyar said, there are hotels where one can get 'Chota Hazri' in the morning. But how many people are prepared to go to the hotels? That is a factor which we have to consider. We are not concerned with people who want to go to hotels for their food or who want to go to coffee houses."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" Is the Hon. Minister likely to take some more time? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" I would like to continue after lunch but I just want to finish this portion of my speech. Therefore, Sir, people should take and accept the food that the Government are able to procure. We are doing our best to procure rice but if we cannot procure sufficient rice, then, there must be some merchants or members of the public at large who should take up this question of procurement of rice."

MR. PRESIDENT :—" The House will now adjourn and meet again at 2-30 p.m."

The House then rose for lunch.

(After lunch-2-30 p.m.)

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" Sir, just at the commencement of the debate, the Leader of the Opposition asked for information on many points. I was not able to give the information immediately but I have since obtained the information and I would give it for the benefit of the House. The allotments of foodgrains from the Government of India for years commencing from 1943 are as follows :—

	TONS.
1943-44	73,000
1944-45	146,000
1945-46	604,000
1946-47	251,000
1947-48	596,600

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Then, Sir, he wanted the amount of subsidy borne by the Madras Government. This subsidy relates to the price of imported grains. It is as follows.

“ The subsidy borne by the Government of Madras up to 1st October 1948 is Rs. 3.26 crores. From 1st October 1948, it is Rs. 32,25,000. The total amount of subsidy borne by the Madras Government is Rs. 3.58 crores.

“ Then, Sir, taking the surplus districts alone into account, the percentage increase in the cost of cultivation ranges from 114.3 to 209.6 since 1939 and by 10.7 to 48.9 as compared with that of last year. The increase in prices as at present sanctioned represents an increase of 275 per cent over the pre-war prices. This also takes into account the increase in the cost of essential commodities other than rice which ranges from 259 to 315 per cent. As compared with the prices just before control was introduced, the increase in the wholesale price of rice now sanctioned works out to about 100 per cent. I am glad the Leader of the Opposition called for these figures. Sir, people who ask for foodgrains and more foodgrains should remember what these more foodgrains cost. Not only it costs the Government of India but it also costs the Government of Madras Rs. 3.58 crores, which represents one-third the loss during the period 1st January 1948 to 30th September 1948 and one-fourth from 1st October 1948 onwards. Therefore, hon. Members can understand that the Government of India have paid more than three-fourths on this item and the amount spent by them will easily come to about 12 to 15 crores, if worked up properly. Altogether this amount was spent from Government resources, both the Government of India and the Madras Government put together. I am just thinking what amount of injustice and injury is done to society as a whole and to the tax-payer by these blackmarketers and others who sell foodstuffs at high prices. They trade not only on the foodstuffs procured in this Province by the Government but also on the food imported into this Province and given to this Government by the Government of India for which we have to pay about 3.58 crores. These blackmarketers in foodgrains are selling at 200 or 300 per cent profit, and this is a horrid injustice to society. This blackmarketing in grains either by ordinary merchants or those who take part in blackmarket businesses is an intolerable thing and no Government can go on under these black-marketing conditions.

“ Sir, here is a resolution which the Hon. Dr. John wants to move and which says : ‘ That this Council recommends to the Government to press upon the Government of India to allot 10 lakhs of tons of foodgrains over and above the allotments already made this year to tide over the serious food situation in the Province.’ I am thankful to him for that resolution and the Madras Government have already taken action on that. They have asked the Government of India to make up this deficit and I hope this resolution going to the Government of India from this Legislature will certainly help us if we need such a help. But,

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apart from that, we want the legislators to realize how much money we will have to pay if this import of ten lakhs comes through the Government of India. Till recently, till two years ago, the Government of India bore the whole burden for these imports, last year, they have been asking us to pay one-third and now they have reduced it to one-fourth. That means to say that out of the enormous prices which the Government have got to pay for all those imports, we have to contribute one-fourth. We could have imports as much as we can but we have to pay a large price. I just want to remind Dr. John whether any private merchant, if he is allowed to import, can pay this amount. Even when the Government of India are making purchases in the international market at protected rates, we have to give this subsidy. Then, would an ordinary purchaser be able to get those imports? I am saying this just to show that it is not at all possible for the Government to allow private merchant to import these foodgrains. Barring his ability to do so, there is the utter impossibility under the existing conditions. Here, it is a question of the whole nation that has got to be fed and therefore I put it to the House to realize what these food import mean. Unless the burden is borne by the tax-payer all over the country and unless the Government of India give the first priority in regard to it, these food imports could not be got. That is why, Sir, the Government of India are more anxious to see that more food is grown in this country. There were remarks made by hon. Members here about the poor response with regard to increased production. I must say till the question became so very acute and the problem of import also assumed such tremendous proportions, the consciousness of our people and the Government also was not awakened to the real fact about our food production. Previous Governments existed for hundreds of years but they were more bent upon collecting the revenues rather than increasing production. When other countries are producing large quantities of foodstuffs, our country has done very little. It is only during the last two or three years, the Government are devoting their attention to more production. The Government of India are now encouraging 'Grow More Food' and they are subsidising the Grow More Food Campaign year after year for the last five years. They have provided sums to the tune of nearly five crores of rupees for this campaign of more production and the Grow More Food Scheme, as it is called.

2-45
p.m.

" Sir, there was another gentleman here who said that this well-sinking subsidy scheme is a nonsense and that it has proved futile. I do not know on what basis he made that statement. Sir, with regard to the number of wells sunk, we have got the figures ready. In all these wells, there is water also. But the real question is how much acreage of land, the water in these wells would serve to irrigate. In fact that is the bigger problem. But as it is, we expect that these newly sunk wells would help in producing nearly a lakh of tons more of rice, spread over a period of two to three years. Even supposing there are these wells, and also the water necessary for irrigation of the fields, still food

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does not come all at once, because the ground has to be ready and then only the foodcrops could be grown on it. And it will, no doubt, take quite a long time, before we could realize our target. When we take this Grow More Food Campaign, I might at once say that we are now in the very initial stages of agricultural improvement, neglected for the past 400 years or so, and taken up now by a national Government. But the responsibility of the national Government to feed the people does not cease on that account, and therefore it is that we are obliged to be carrying on procurement of all that we need and are decided upon getting.

" I know a lot of corruption has crept into the services, and in areas far remote from the cities. The village officers have to go about levying a toll of foodgrains. I admit that this affects the poor man. But while making our calculations in regard to procurement, we have been very careful to see that the requirements of the producers themselves are well provided. We have issued instructions—and I hope these instructions are carried out, because it is our own men that carry out these orders—regarding this procurement of foodgrains. The general public also has got to know that they have got certain rights with regard to what they produce. They must realize that it is not all they produce, that is wanted by the Government. And after all Government are buying these foodgrains not for themselves, but only for distribution to hungry people. So these producers must come out, and give all that they have less what portion they are permitted by the Government to retain for their own use. We have provided for as much as one pound per day per head; the seed grains also have been provided for. The demands of those who work for him in the production of food, also have been provided for in the amount that is allowed to be retained by him. If a man still comes and says: 'All my food has been taken away', it means only this, that he is such an ignorant fool that does not know what the Government want, or that he is a knave that does not tell the truth. But the fact remains that the quantity of food that is ordered to be left with him, by the Government has been very specifically laid down in the instructions which have been issued to the officers of the Department, who are to carry out these.

" Recently a month back, I had a conference of these producers of this Province, then I went into the whole question in great detail, and all these facts that I have now placed before you, I have placed before them also. It is not as if they know nothing about it. They know these fully well. Besides, I had a conference in two batches of the District Collectors from all over the Presidency, when I spoke to them for nearly two hours every time and detailed very clearly how this procurement policy has to be carried out. Literally, I made as much as to say that there is so much of corruption prevailing, and explained how it prevails, and how that could be put down. These Collectors have noted down all these, and so are quite clear about the instructions that we have given them.

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Besides, Sir, there are District Committees in every district, all of which have been revived, and have been asked to consider the food situation in each locality and make recommendations to the Government with regard to the stocks held by the people of that locality and their requirements.

Having said these things, I am aware of the fact that there are still a large number of people who have to be fed. And here the village officials have to be watched. In fact, I know in some villages, they were only very happy to learn that controls are going to be introduced. It is because, they could have an income of their own. Food laws being so strict, and being laws which could not wait for appeals, but demand for executive action immediately, —there is no provision of law which can empower the court to go into all these things—we have necessarily to fall back upon our own men to do the work. The pity of it is they are all our own men, we cannot now accuse them, because they are no longer under a foreign Government, they are now under their own Government, and are to collect the food required for their own people. This is the real picture.

Having made this picture quite clear, and done our best to secure all that we want from the producers of our own Province, and from imports from other countries, we have now to ask the Government of India to give us some quota. There are Provinces in India which could give us some foodgrains. It is therefore not as if we merely secure the foodgrains available in our own Province by way of procurement. We are also commandeering foodgrains from those other Provinces that constitute the Union of India, which could spare some foodgrains for us. Only the Government of India have the power to say how much quantity of foodgrains shall move from one surplus Province to another deficit Province. So, there is this inter-Provincial movement of foodgrains, imports from outside, and also commandeering of the production in the home Province. I have already acquainted the House with the efforts we have already made to produce more food, and the information as to how the Grow More Food Campaign is working.

There is only one other thing, to which I would like to draw the attention of the hon. Members of the House. It is this. The Government of India are not issuing any bonuses to the producers, as they did in the past few years. No doubt, the Government of Madras got a bonus of about As. 8 per maund of rice that they procure. But the Government of India stipulated that these As. 8 should be spent in producing more food, in developing the land, and in encouraging the food production in the way best suited to the Province and in meeting the loss incurred in the distribution of foodgrains. That is the understanding with which we are given these eight annas. Therefore, in all these matters, we have fallen in line with the Government of India for we have felt not only the need, but the justice of the demand that we are making, and the claim that is made by the people of this Province.

There were a few other statements, Sir, made without sufficient thought, to the effect that the food situation is not critical. I may tell the persons responsible for that statement,

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that the case is just the other way about. I want to remind this House of the Bengal tragedy. Millions of people died of starvation; but the most gruesome picture is that they did raise sufficient food in Bengal; and while there was plenty of food, people died of starvation. This is something which nobody can explain. But those unscrupulous people who hoarded the grain for trade purposes and refused to put them in the market for purchase, and committed the crime, are people who held very high places in the ministerial sphere. They were all in league with these black-marketeers, with the result that lakhs of people died in Bengal, and the Bengal tragedy got an international reputation. I may say, one of the results it has produced is that the International Food Conference has gained concrete reality, and the Government of India have been able to have their say in this International Food Conference, with regard to their demand for food.

“ Sir, I think I have practically answered all the questions that have been raised. I have explained clearly, as far as it is in my power to do so, the implications of the food policy of this Government. But there is one other question which I have not so far touched, and that is concerned with prices. I have already given statistics as regards the percentages of increase. A cry has been made and particularly from responsible quarters, for instance from Malabar, the President of the Kerala Congress Committee has written an article on the subject in “ Mathurbhoomi ”—that the Madras Government have been unfair to Malabar, simply on account of the policy of prices which they have announced recently. I am very sorry to learn that from him. I must say that the policy of prices has to be announced at certain times in the year, and has to be in force, for say, one year or more. If people who have given paddy to the Government have given it some fifteen days or three weeks ago, they may not be getting the advantage of this increased price. But in the next instalment of paddy they give us, they will be getting this increased price. It is absolutely unfair to say that we had a motive in fixing up a date for announcing our policy regarding increased prices. These prices, Sir, were issued after very deep consideration. The Collectors of the Province, the Agricultural Department, and the reports of various villages and districts, on the prices that are prevailing now, and the personal requirements of the families of these producers, have all been of very great use to us. After this only, we fixed the target for our prices. I say, that the Government of India were not agreeable to this. They said that the prices we have fixed are too high, and therefore should not be allowed. But we said that in the interests of our procurement campaign, this price at least has to be given; otherwise, our procurement campaign will be retarded in its progress. I have consulted a number of producers, and in fixing the prices, I myself, who claim to be an agriculturist, and the Hon. Premier of the Province, have bestowed our great attention on this problem for days together, have had a good deal of correspondence with the Government of India on the subject, and then only fixed these prices. I should perhaps emphasize the fact that these prices are no mean prices. Our agriculturists are pleased with them, and are prepared to give us foodgrains at these rates.

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They do not think they have been unfairly treated. It may be that they do not get the profits of the industry, which they would have got, if the prices had been allowed to soar according to the market fluctuations, but we cannot allow that, and it is therefore that we said that this fair price shall be fixed. That is the best that Government could do. And when we fixed these prices, we had absolutely no district in our mind. We had the whole Province in our mind, while thinking of the target that we had to fix. We had also in mind the tragedy which occurred in Malabar some years ago, and the loss in life that was occasioned in that famine-stricken area. Sir, Malabar does not produce enough food for its inhabitants, some 440 lakhs or so, in number. It is a chronically deficit area, which lives only by imports that are supplied to them by the Provincial Government. Therefore, Sir, it is our pleasure and pride to say that we have not so far allowed Malabar to get into a state of famine. Nor have we allowed this Province to get into any starvation tragedy. With the failure of the monsoon, with districts dry for months, with tanks without a drop of water for a year or more, particularly the districts of Tinnevely, Madura and Ramnad have been faced with the threat of a famine, and this indeed was very startling. But we have been able to manage the situation, on account of the Government of India's goodwill, by keeping so many centres where foodgrains have been stored. And to-day I may say we have got about two lakhs of tons at our disposal in those granaries. It is because of this policy of ours in having storage centres, that we have been able to avert the famines that were about to make their ghastly presence. We could move these foodgrains on from these centres to any districts that are in need of them, and may come to the rescue of the starving millions of our Province.

3 p.m. "I want Malabar to realize that they of all the districts have no reason to complain. We have been very fair with them. We have not tried to deprive poor Malabar people of their just rights. This procurement will go till the end of the year. The price programme is for the Kharif year—from the end of October to the beginning of November next year. It has been suggested that the kharif year should be changed into fasli year. We have to keep in step with the Government of India. We are now in communication with the Government of India whether the kharif year can be changed into fasli year. But as long as the price is fixed for a whole year, there will be no injustice to anybody.

"Sir, this procurement is a very painful process. We are not all very happy about it. But we want and we seek the complete co-operation of everyone in this Province—the co-operation of the producer to produce as much as he can, the co-operation of the merchant to sell the produce to the Government and not to sell it in the black-market. Treat us fairly. That is my appeal to the merchants. We want to be impartial and it is not our intention to withhold food from anybody. We seek the help of the press, the help of the man in the street, the help of the politician and the constructive worker. It is only in that way we can go on, carrying on till such time as the country becomes normal with regard to

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food requirements. I expect this would be in another two or three years. I plead in this House and through this House to the public at large, that whatever may be our differences in politics and many other things, there should be no politics in the question of food, there should be no question of linguistic divisions here. Food is the property of all the people. The Government, if it is worth anything, has got to secure food for the people and we want to secure it with the best will in the world."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" I said there was no politics in food."

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" There is, if you only see it. I do not want to go into that question now. I want all parties and agencies whatever may be the differences of opinion, to help us in the campaign of food procurement."

DR. V. K. JOHN :—" What about my suggestion regarding the encouragement of private agencies for irrigation? "

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" That is not quite germane to the question before us.

" With regard to the distribution of manure, the Government have not enough manure to honour the coupons they have given. They have already decided to give cash. There are some difficulties in procuring manure and selling it cheaply. We decided to fix the price of manure. What happened was this: people began to trade in manure coupons. They gathered a number of coupons from ignorant villagers, bought our manure at controlled rates and sold it in the black-market at four to five times the price. To what depths the public conscience would descend was shown by this. This will give you an idea of the main difficulty we have to contend against. We are seriously thinking of decontrolling groundnut cake altogether so that there may be a free market and people who want it may go and purchase what they like. By our manipulations we will not put up the prices. The manure will be available to whomsoever wants it and he will not have the necessity of going to the black-market. Simply because we have an undertaking to supply manure at controlled rates, the poor agriculturist has been cheated of his dues and the manure intended for the land went into the black-market."

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" Are the Government having complete control of groundnut cake? "

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" It is 40 and 60 per cent. Even that we are seriously considering to give up."

SRI N. SANKARA REDDI :—" Is bonus given for procurement of millets? "

* THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN :—" The bonus is given on the total quantity of foodgrains procured. Sir, an hon. Member asked about the polishing of rice. It is a crime which we are committing unconsciously in this country. Polishing was not at all known before and when we were taking whole rice without

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polishing we were more healthy and lived longer. (An hon. Member: We can't eat this unpolished rice.) Just imagine an hon. Gentleman saying that he can't eat this wholesome and good rice! I know how much mud and rotten stuff is adulterated with this rice by unscrupulous millets and that the quantity is reduced by polishing. We have now increased the price of rice only by Re. 0-1-4 per measure. It is not much considering the level of commodity prices. Sir, the difficulties of the food administration are so many that we cannot possibly carry it on successfully for any length of time unless we get the co-operation of the people."

MR. PRESIDENT:—"The question is—

'That the food situation in the Province be taken into consideration and upon such consideration this Council recommends to the Government to press upon the Government of India to allot ten lakhs of tons of foodgrains over and above the allotments already made for this year to tide over the serious food situation in the Province.'

"I suppose the Government have no objection."

THE HON. DR. T. S. S. RAJAN:—"No, Sir."

The motion was put and passed unanimously.

III.—TEXTILE CONTROL POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

* THE HON. SRI H. SITARAMA REDDI:—"I move, Sir, that the Textile Control policy of the Government be taken into consideration.

"Sir, I have just now circulated a note on the subject to hon. members. I am sorry it could not be done earlier. If it is the wish of hon. Members that I should read it, I shall do so." (Hon. Members: 'Not necessary.')

MR. PRESIDENT:—"I think the intention is more to criticise you than to hear you. You may hear them speak and then reply."

* THE HON. SRI H. SITARAMA REDDI:—"Then I make the formal motion. Sir, when I just entered the House the Hon. the Leader of the Opposition gave me certain questions and asked for information on certain points. I shall give it here as it will be useful to the House.

"The quantity of cloth required for consumption in the Province in a year is 384,000 bales on a per capita basis of 12 yards which was the consumption in pre-war years. The quantity of cloth produced by mills in the Province in a year is 79,700 bales. The quantity of cloth produced by handlooms in the Province in a year is 288,000 bales. I have no information ready with me regarding the quantity of khaddar produced in the Province in a year. The quantity imported annually into the Province from other Provinces and also from outside India is 180,000 bales from Bombay surplus area, but no figures are available about imports from foreign countries. With regard to the quantity of cloth exported from the Province, 4,000 bales used to be exported every month